

DCI BRIEFING

19 May 1961

GUATEMALA

I. President Miguel Ydigoras, midway in a 6-year term, [REDACTED] 25X1

25X1 [REDACTED] retains power largely by adept manipulation of opponents against one another, preventing development of unified opposition.

A. Ydigoras is unable to build his own effective political machine and unwilling to resort to harsh authoritarian methods.

B. He is personally popular among unorganized lower class elements but has failed to convey a sense of accomplishment or direction to more politically aware Guatemalans.

1. Many of the latter consider him motivated solely by a desire to retain power and condemn his tolerance of widespread graft among his close associates.

II. Dissidence in armed forces has persisted since shakeups following the abortive military revolt last November but is believed confined to junior and inactive officers.

A. No information that key unit/^{commanders} are involved in current plotting.

25X1

[REDACTED]

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III. Most top Communist leaders now back in Guatemala for first time since 1954 fall of Arbenz.

- A. They are actively reorganizing the party and attempting to strengthen their influence in labor and other front groups.
 - 1. Party still relatively weak, with about 1,100 members and 1,000 sympathizers, and was unable to organize strong, effective pro-Castro demonstrations in April.
- B. Communists have benefited from Ydigoras' success in weakening leftist but strongly anti-Communist Revolutionary Party (PR), only party with a degree of mass support.
- C. Ydigoras probably Castro's prime target in Central American and Communist activity in Guatemala is receiving and will continue to receive increasing guidance and support from Cuba, where Arbenz has been living since last July.

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